



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 7, 2006

The Honorable John M. McHugh
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3223

Dear Congressman McHugh

Thank you for your May 2, 2006 letter regarding New York Regional Interconnection Inc. ("NYRI") and its request to the Department of Energy for an early designation of a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor ("National Corridor").

The Department recently communicated to NYRI our decision to take no action in response to NYRI's early designation request. Instead, the Department plans to complete work on its national transmission congestion study pursuant to section 1221(a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and to release that study for public review and comment prior to designating any National Corridors. The study will likely identify a "watch list" of a number of transmission problem areas, and a smaller subset of areas where transmission needs appear to be acute. When we release the congestion study, we expect to identify certain areas that, as specified by section 1221(a), are "geographic area[s] experiencing electric energy transmission capacity constraints or congestion that adversely affect consumers," and thus potentially may be eligible for designation by the Department as National Corridors.

The designation of a National Corridor does not, in itself, entitle a project developer to proceed with construction of an electric transmission facility in the National Corridor. Designation of a National Corridor is a finding that there is a geographic area experiencing electric energy transmission capacity constraints or congestion that adversely affects consumers -- it does not site transmission facilities. Applications to site electric transmission facilities in National Corridors would need to go through applicable local, state and federal permitting procedures. As a result, even within a National Corridor, a developer of proposed transmission facilities would need to obtain relevant permits and government approvals, and there would be ample opportunity for public input and participation prior to the issuance of those permits and approvals.

Thank you again for your letter and for expressing your concerns regarding this issue. If you have further questions, please contact me at 202.586.8567, or Jill Sigal, Assistant Secretary of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at 202.586.5450.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kolevar
Director, Office of Electricity Delivery
and Energy Reliability

